

Claims

1. A method of managing subscriber data in a communications network, the method comprising:
 - sending a message associated with a subscriber and including data relating to the identity of said subscriber;
 - routing said message to a first network entity based on identity and routing information stored at a register;
 - subsequent to receiving said message at the first network entity, provisioning a second network entity with subscriber data required by said second network entity to be able to service said subscriber; and
 - updating routing information associated with the subscriber at the register to route subsequent signalling to the second network entity.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising:
 - storing a plurality of subscriber identities at the first network entity; and
 - provisioning the second network entity with subscriber data if the data relating to the identity of the subscriber in the message corresponds to one of said plurality of subscriber identities.
3. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the message is sent from a mobile station of the subscriber.
4. A method as claimed in claim 3 wherein the message includes International Mobile Subscriber Identity (IMSI).
5. A method as claimed in claim 3 or 4 wherein the message further includes data relating to the location of the mobile station.
6. A method as claimed in any of claims 3 to 5, comprising sending data from the first network entity to the mobile station, to provide the subscriber with a preliminary service.

7. A method as claimed in claim 6 wherein said data sent from the first network entity to the mobile station further comprises authentication information.

8. A method as claimed in claims 6 and 7 wherein said preliminary service comprises transmitting a notification message to the mobile station to notify the subscriber that a service request has been acknowledged.

9. A method as claimed in claim 8 wherein said notification message comprises a voice announcement.

10. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the message is sent to the register via another register.

11. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the register comprises a service routing register.

12. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the first network entity comprises a provisioning home location register (pHLR).

13. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the second network entity comprises a home location register (HLR).

14. A method as claimed in claim 10 or any claim dependent on claim 10 wherein said other routing register comprises a visitor location register (VLR).

15. A method as claimed in any of claims 1 to 12, wherein the second network entity comprises one of: a voicemail system entity; a mail server entity; a multimedia messaging server entity; a wireless application part gateway entity; a prepaid server entity; intelligent network server; short message service centre; location based service centre; USSD-centre; GPRS-server; charging and rating server.

16. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, comprising provisioning at least one further network element with subscriber data.

17. A method for managing subscriber data in a communications network, the method comprising:

- determining that a subscriber has become inactive in at least one network entity arranged to provide subscriber data for use in servicing the subscriber;

- creating a profile relating to the subscriber at an auxiliary network entity;
- updating the information stored at a routing register to route subsequent signalling associated with the subscriber to the auxiliary (pHLR) network entity;
- and

- deleting a profile relating to the subscriber data from the at least one network entity.

18. A method as claimed in claim 15 further comprising determining that a user has become inactive if the time lapsed since a last message, associated with the subscriber, was routed exceeds a predetermined time.

19. A communication system for servicing subscribers, comprising:

- a first network entity for storing subscriber data for inactive subscribers;
- a second network entity for storing subscriber data required for enabling service profiles for subscribers of the communication system;
- a register for providing routing information for routing messages associated with subscribers;

- means for provisioning the second network entity with subscriber data associated with a subscriber to be activated and stored at the first network entity based on a message including information relating to the identity of said subscriber, the arrangement being such that the subscriber is activated by provisioning the second network entity with subscriber data from the first network entity and by updating routing information associated with said subscriber at the register to route subsequent signalling associated with said subscriber to the second network entity.

20. A subscriber data management entity for a communications network, said subscriber data management entity being arranged to store subscriber data for inactive subscribers and to provision at least one another entity of the communication network with subscriber data associated with a subscriber to be activated based on a message including information relating to the identity of said subscriber.

21. A register for a communications network, said register being arranged to store routing information relating to the identity of a plurality of subscribers, to route signalling associated with inactive subscribers to a first network entity and to update routing information for at least one of said plurality of subscribers to route signalling to a second network entity when said at least one of said plurality of subscribers becomes active.